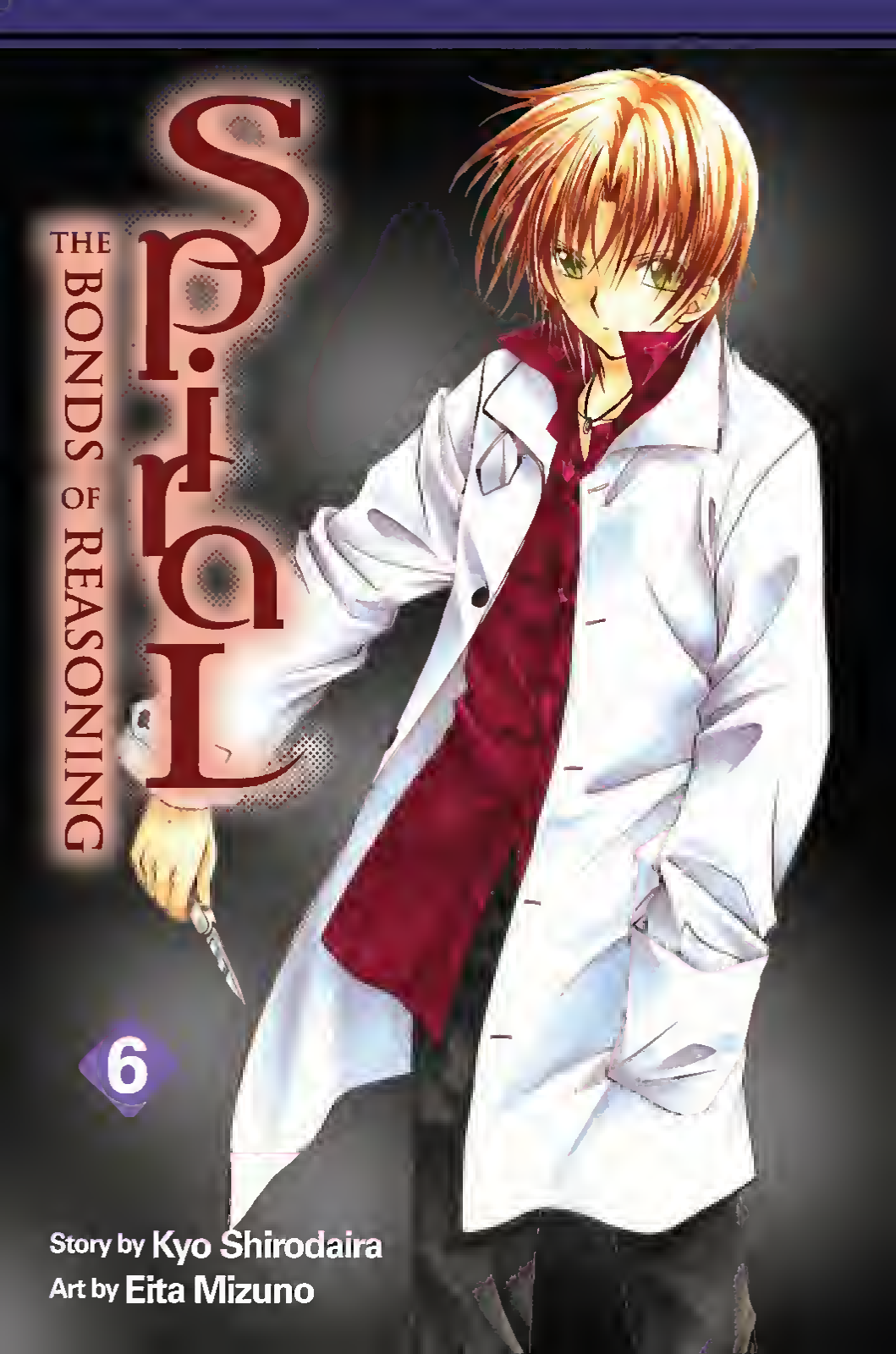
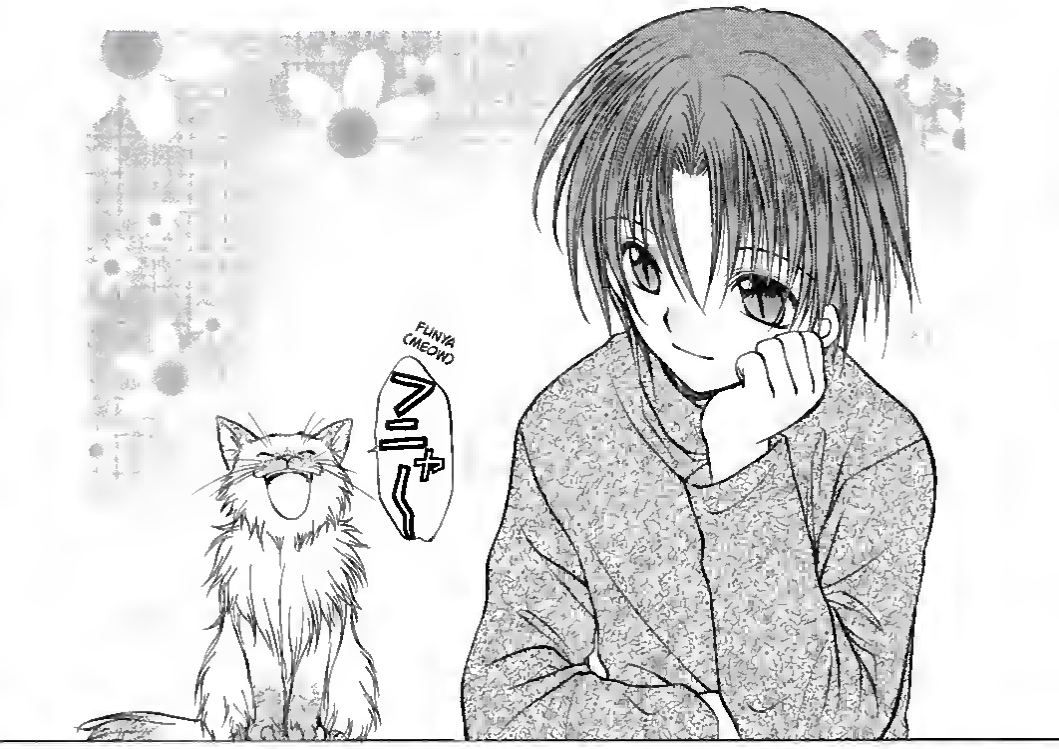

Spiral
THE BONDS OF REASONING
6
Story by Kyo Shirodaira
Art by Eita Mizuno

THE BONDS OF REASONING
Sp.iraL
6
STORY/KYO SHIRODAIRA
ART/EITA MIZUNO

All that
You can't
Get over
The SPIRAL



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PARA (FLIP)
ぱら
BASA (FWAP)
ばさっ
.....
MAGAZINE: ATTENTION!
SPECIAL FEATURE ON SHINTO GODS!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
DISTANT DAWN

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
DISTANT DAWN

宮下総合病院
SIGN: MIYASHITA GENERAL HOSPITAL
12
9
3
6
...IF YOU'RE GOING TO VISIT ME, AT LEAST BRING ME SOME CAKE OR A MELON.
I CAN'T EAT FLOWERS.
BUSU (POUT)
ぶすっ

THEY'RE FROM KIYOTAKA.
.....
...
THEY'RE NOT FROM ME...
...THAT'S SO LIKE HIM.
IRISES ...
"THE JOY OF A BELIEVER" ...RIGHT?
KIYOTAKA-SAMA'S FAVORITE FLOWER...

WHAT DOES ONE GAIN BY BELIEVING?
.....
GASA (RUSTLE)
...TO "HUNT" US BLADE CHILDREN.
...KANON ARRIVES IN JAPAN...
THIS AFTER-NOON...

RIO.
I'M ASKING YOU TO PREPARE YOURSELF TO TAKE ON KANON.
YEAH, I KNOW.
WE HAVE TO STOP KANON-KUN...
EVEN IF HE'S OUR ENEMY NOW...
...HE'S STILL ONE OF OUR PRECIOUS COMRADES...
.....
KIYOTAKA...
...WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

NOW THAT KANON HAS TURNED AGAINST US...
...ARE YOU ASKING ME TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF?
COULD IT BE THAT THIS TOO...
...IS ALL A PART OF YOUR PLAN...?
GI (CLENCH)
Have faith.

Some-
where
inside of
Kanon-
kun...
.....
...he
must want
Eyes-kun to
stop him.

AAAW...
I GIVE UP...
EVER SINCE I GAVE HER THE SLIP BEFORE...
...SIS HASN'T SAID A WORD TO ME.
PAKU! (CHOMP)
I'M GLAD SHE'S NOT ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS, BUT...
GIRA (GLARE)
ギラ
...WITH ALL THAT GLARING AT ME SHE DOES FROM THE SHADOWS...

.....
カタ…
KATA (CLACK)
EVER SINCE THEN, THE GANG HASN'T PULLED ANYTHING AT ALL.
I'M THANKFUL FOR THE PEACE AND QUIET, BUT STILL...
THERE'S A STORM ON THE WAY...
THE PROBLEM WITH MY BROTHER ISN'T RESOLVED AT ALL.
NARUMI-SAN! NARUMI-SAN! NARUMI-SAAAAN!!
...SAN!
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

NARUMI-SAAAN!!!
KIIIN (SCREECH)
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN!!
THERE'S AN EMER-GENCY!
AN EMER-GENCY!!
PIPE DOWN.
DON'T MAKE SUCH A RACKET WHILE I'M EATING.
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE TAKING IT EASY!
GUI (YANK)
くい!

A NEW STUDENT TRANSFERRED INTO THE SECOND-YEAR CLASS TODAY!
...GEEZ.
A TRANSFER STUDENT'S NOTHING TO GET EXCITED OVER.
SO WHAT?
SO ...!!
UUURGH!
I TOLD YOU, IT'S AN EMERGENCY!
NU CLOOMD
?
.....

YO.
.....
WH—
GASHA (RATTLE)
PORO (DROP)
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?
ASA-ZUKI!!
WHAT ELSE?
I JUST TRANS-FERRED IN TODAY.
KERORI (NONCHALANT)

SEE!
ASAZUKI-SAN'S COME TO OUR SCHOOL AS A TRANSFER STUDENT!
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, HE SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED WHEN HE WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH, RIGHT?
SO WHERE'D HE EVEN TRANSFER FROM!?
IT'S BOGUS. BOGUS, I TELL YOU!!
AND HIS SCORE ON THE TRANSFER ENTRANCE EXAM WAS EXCELLENT TOO!
YEAH, THAT DOES SOUND PRETTY BOGUS.
MU (GRR)
HOW RUDE.
I HAPPEN TO BE A GOOD TEST-TAKER.
"ごほん"
GOHON (COUGH)
ANY-WAY!
NARUMI JUNIOR.
STARTING TODAY, I'M AN UPPER-CLASSMAN.

AS IF!!
So show some respect and call me Asazuki-senpai.
...YOU DIDN'T TRANSFER HERE AS A JOKE, I TAKE IT?
YOU PLANNING ON KILLING SOMEONE AGAIN?
...HMM, WHO KNOWS?
NIYA (SMIRK)
IF YOU WANT, I COULD KILL A COUPLE PEOPLE. HOW'S THAT SOUND?

WHY, YOU—
DRAAAA!!
DOKA (SLAM)
KOU-SUKE!!
DON'T GO AROUND MAKING TROUBLE ON YOUR FIRST DAY!!
WHA!?
ZUZA (SLIDE)
GASHAN (CRASH)
GAH!
DWWW

...YOU!
RYOUKO!!
YOU TRYIN' TO KILL ME!?
LIKE THAT WAS ENOUGH TO KILL YOU!?
QUIT MESSING AROUND AND GET UP.
むくり MUKURI (RISE)
DAMMIT...
A SUDDEN FLYING KICK... FOR REAL...?
BE A MAN AND QUIT COMPLAINING.
HERE.
LUNCH BREAK'S SHORT.
GO BUY ME SOME BREAD.
.....
BREAD?

I'M TALKING ABOUT MY LUNCH, DUH.
NI (SMILE)
GO BUY ME SOME.
...LISTEN, WHY DO I GOTTA—
AAAW, COME OON...
TEKU (TMP)
TEKU
...BUY IT!!!
DO (WHACK)
WAH!
(YORO) STAGGER
HMPH!
...DAMM/T.

BATAN (SLAM)
I'LL PUT A COLLAR ON KOUSUKE...
HE SURE IS A PAIN, HUH?
KURU (TURN)
...SO JUST DON'T MIND HIM FOR A WHILE.
DON'T TELL ME, YOU'RE ALSO A—
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M ONE OF THE BLADE CHILDREN.
NAME'S RYOUKO TAKAMACHI.

I'VE ALREADY HEARD ALL ABOUT YOU TWO.
YOU SHOULD JUST SIT ON THE SIDELINES FOR A WHILE.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I MEAN, PLAY WHEN YOU CAN PLAY.
THAT IS, BEFORE YOU CAN'T ANYMORE.
SEE YA!

...HEY.
JUST WHAT IS GOING ON HERE...?

GOOD WORK! ♪
HERE.
MUSU (PISSED)
I BOUGHT WHAT YOU WANTED.
BAKERY
Crazy Moon
I'VE HEARD RUMORS AROUND SCHOOL, BUT...
GASA (RUSTLE)
...THAT'S KIYOTAKA'S LITTLE BROTHER, RIGHT?
YEAH ...
HE'S PRETTY CUTE FOR BEING THAT GOON'S LITTLE BROTHER.

IT'S SAFE TO SAY...
...HE'S GOT A MONSTER DEEP INSIDE HIS HEART.
I WONDER ABOUT THAT.
.....

WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL DIE BY HIS HAND...
...I SWEAR, THE SMILE FALLS RIGHT OFF MY FACE.

SO KANON'S COMING TO JAPAN TODAY, RIGHT?
HM? OH, YEAH.
STARTING TOMORROW, HE'LL BE A STUDENT HERE.

.....
PAKU (CHOMP)
.....
...I'M SORRY FOR GETTING YOU INVOLVED...

.....
I KNOW YOU WON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT...
...YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I NEVER MEANT TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR.
...KOU-SUKE.

I KNEW IT! YOU HAVE!
HUH?
HAVE YOU...
...GOTTEN TALLER?
YOU'VE BEEN TAKING CALCIUM PILLS REGULARLY, HAVEN'T YOU!?
JUST A YEAR AGO, I WAS TALLER!!
GARU (CHOMP)
DAMN!
OW!
THAT'S PRETTY CHEEKY EVEN FOR YOU, KOUSUKE!!
TSUPAN (SMACK)

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE A CHILDHOOD FRIEND...
.....
HEH
KIIIIII (SCREEEEEE)
ZAWA
ZAWA (CHATTER)

ZAWA
KYORO (GLANCE)
ZAWA
ZAWA
ZAWA
TA (DASH)
I KNEW YOU'D COME TO MEET ME.
I'M SO HAPPY.
I EVEN BOUGHT YOU A SOUVENIR.

.....
...I'M SORRY.
IT WAS DECIDED THAT WAY.
...SO YOU'RE REALLY STANDING HERE BEFORE ME AS A "HUNTER," RIGHT?
...I'M NOT LETTING YOU HUNT ANYBODY...
I'LL BE THE ONE TO STOP YOU.
AND I WILL STOP YOU.

...YOU'RE TOO KIND.
THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...
SU (STEP)
...BECAUSE...

GIRI!
GRIP!
—KANON...
YOU...!!

Have a nice death.
GOSO (SHOVE)
ZURU (SHLICK)

...KIYO-TAKA.....
...FOR BELIEVING?
DOKU (THROB)
GURA (COLLAPSE)
IS THIS WHAT I GET...

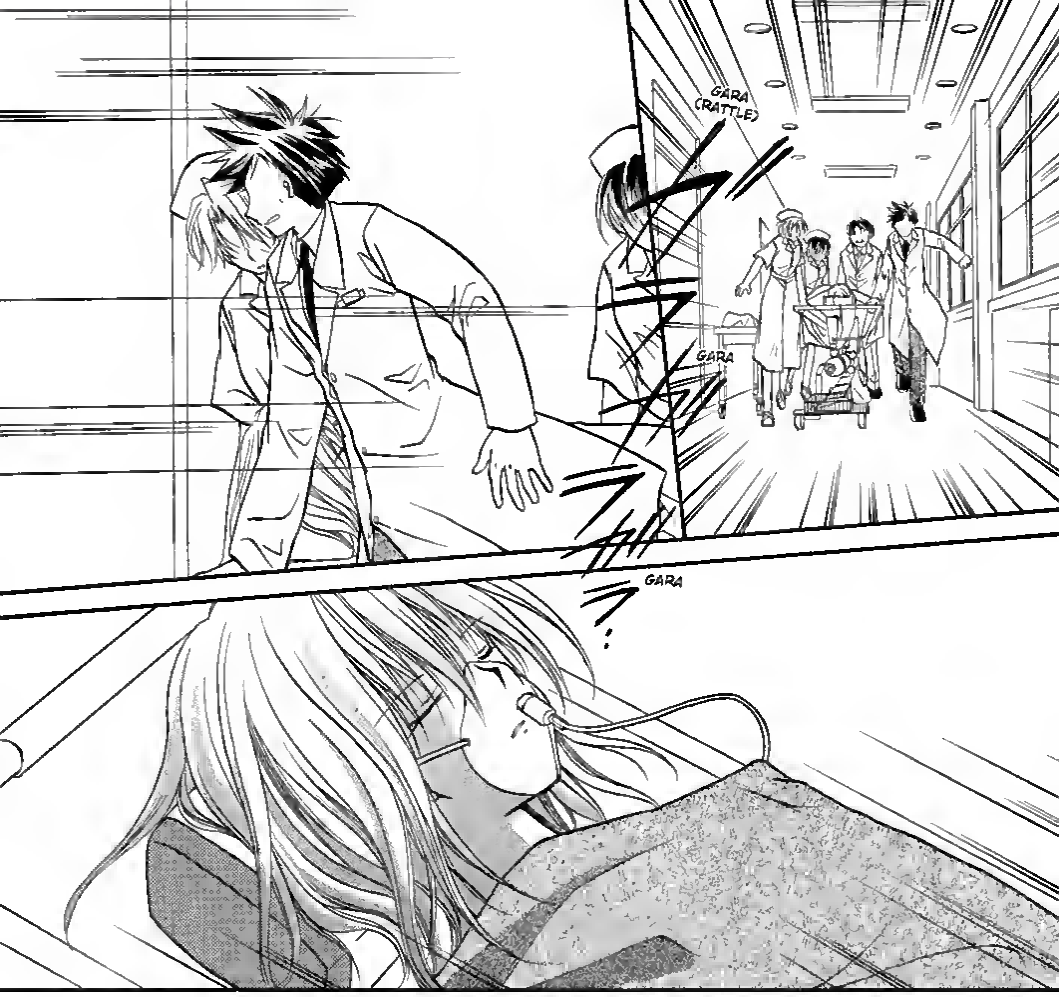
DOSA
(THUD)
ドサ

THE "HUNT"...
...BEGINS...

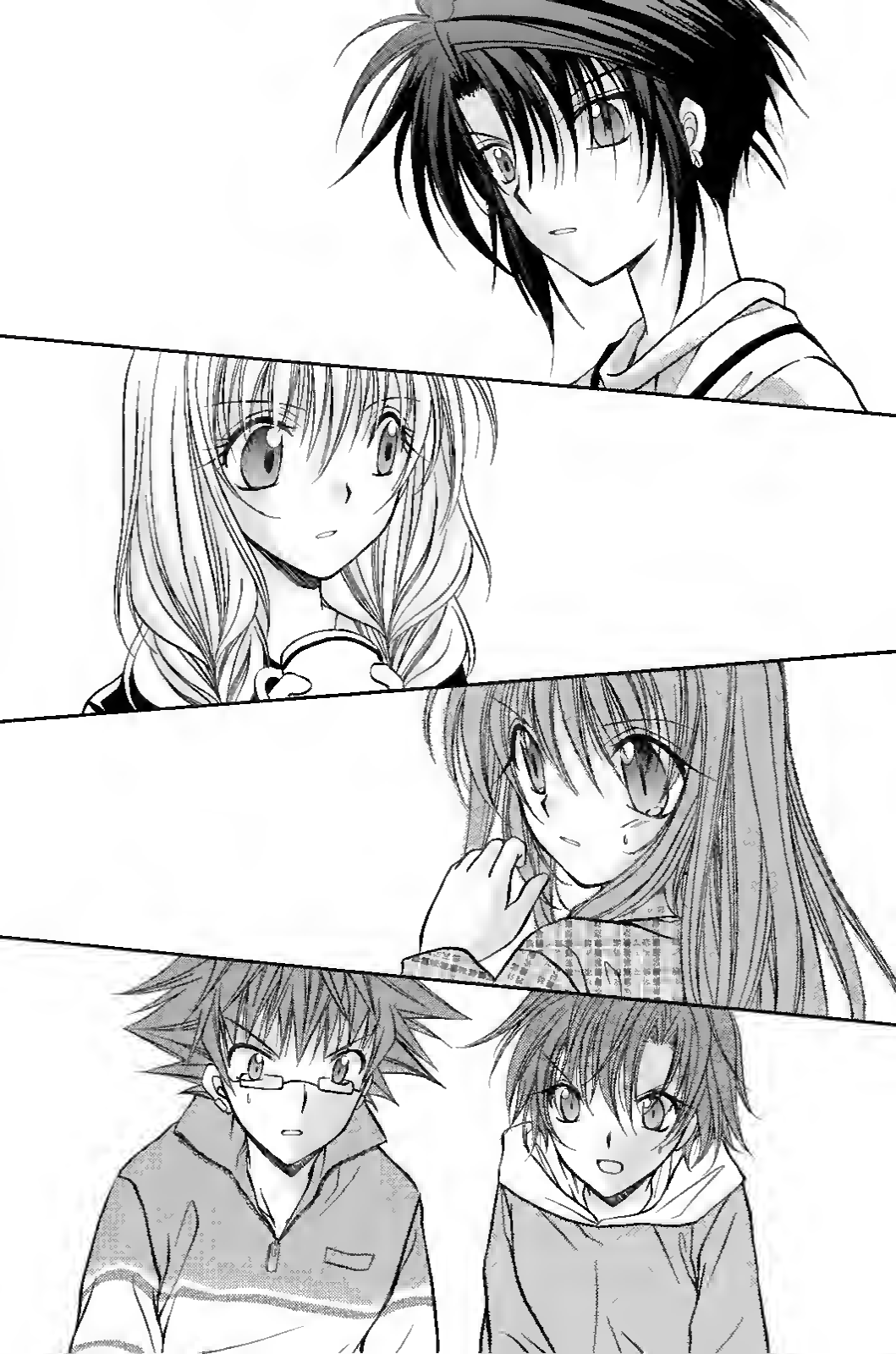
Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN
WALTZ INTO DARKNESS


GARA (RATTLE)
GARA
GARA

TV: NEWS SEVEN / WHILE VISITING JAPAN, FAMOUS PIANIST IS STAB—
Just after 4 p.m. today, Eyes Rutherford—the famous pianist currently visiting Japan—was rushed to the hospital after being attacked at the International Airport.



IF RUTHERFORD'S BEEN STABBED, IT'S GOTTA BE—!!
RUTHERFORD'S BEEN STABBED!?
AND WHO!!?
WHY ON EARTH WOULD SOMEONE DO THAT!?
WHO OTHER THAN KANON COULD DO THAT TO HIM!?
WHO ELSE!?
The police say—
After undergoing emergency surgery, he is currently unconscious and in critical condition.
M.M COFFEE
STUDIO ANTA

UNCONSCIOUS AND IN CRITICAL CONDITION...
WELL...
STUDIO ANTA
SO HE SURVIVED EVEN AFTER THAT...
EYES IS A STUBBORN ONE, ALL RIGHT.
ANTA
...HE WON'T LAST LONG ANYWAY.
MM-HM.

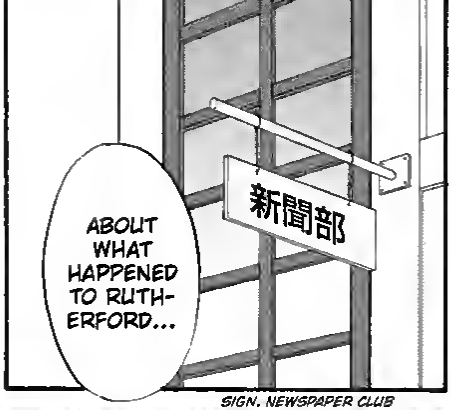
...HOW WILL ASAZUKI AND THE OTHERS REACT TO THIS?
...NOW, THEN...
ANTA VISION
Though the airport was bustling with people at the time of the attack...
...no helpful eyewitness reports have yet been obtained.
AND KIYOTAKA'S LITTLE BROTHER TOO...
Pi (BEEP) Pi

PI
PI
PI
PI
2-C
MY NAME IS KANON HILBERT.
DESPITE MY NAME, I'M HALF-JAPANESE.

NIKO (SMILE)
WELL, I MAY NOT BE ANYTHING SPECIAL, BUT I STILL HOPE I CAN GET ALONG WITH ALL OF YOU.
SO I STUDIED JAPANESE WHILE I WAS IN ENGLAND TOO.
I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE KANSAI DIALECT EITHER.
KIN (DING)
KON (DONG)
KANON-KUN! KANON-KUN!
WON'T YOU HAVE LUNCH WITH US?
HOW ABOUT IT?

GARA (RATTLE)
I'M REALLY SORRY.
I'VE ALREADY GOT THIS DREADFUL MEETING TO ATTEND.
NIKO (SMILE)

YOU SURE ARE POPULAR FOR IT BEING YOUR FIRST DAY HERE.
THAT'S BECAUSE, UNLIKE YOU, I'VE GOT A GOOD FACE AND A PERSONALITY TO MATCH.
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.
COME ON, RYOUKO! WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON!?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, KANON...
PON (PAT)
...WON'T YOU HANG OUT WITH US FOR A WHILE?
SU (RAISE)
OF COURSE.



SIGN. NEWSPAPER CLUB

HE'S BEEN UNCONSCIOUS THE WHOLE TIME...
THE POLICE DON'T HAVE ANY CLUE AS TO THE CULPRIT'S IDENTITY.
AND RUTHERFORD-SAN IS TEETERING ON THE BRINK OF DEATH.
IN THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, HE MIGHT EVEN DIE...
SHIT!!
DAN (BANG)
AH—!!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!?
THIS MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY BROTHER AND THE BLADE CHILDREN!
...LET'S CALM DOWN, NARUMI-SAN...

WE HAVE TO CALM DOWN AND ANALYZE THE SITUATION...
BUT THIS ISN'T...
I KNOW THAT.
...THE WAY THINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO GO...
...YOU...

IF RUTHER-FORD DIES...
...YOU CAN NEVER GO BACK.
HMPH
I'VE DECIDED TO LIVE THE REMAINDER OF MY LIFE AS A "HUNTER."

...GIVE THOSE WHO STARTED THIS NIGHTMARE THEIR PROPER DUES.
I'M GOING TO HUNT ALL THE DETESTABLE BLADE CHILDREN...
...AND THEN...

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GOING BACK TO ANYWHERE.
AS FAR AS MY ABILITIES ALLOW...
...I WILL PASS JUDGMENT ON ALL SINNERS.
...PASS JUDG-MENT?
YOU AND I ARE BOTH MUR-DERERS.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, WE DON'T DESERVE THAT JUSTICE.
I KNOW.

I DON'T THINK OF IT AS JUSTICE.
THOSE WHO ARE BORN IN DARKNESS WILL BE RETURNED TO THAT DARKNESS BY THE HAND OF OTHERS LIKE THEM.
THAT'S ALL.
...SO THAT I TOO CAN RETURN TO THE DARK-NESS.
SU (LIFT)
AND EVENTU-ALLY...
...I'LL BLOW MY BRAINS OUT WITH THIS HAND...
.....

...SO IN THE END...
...IT LOOKS LIKE HAVING IT OUT IS OUR ONLY OPTION.
.....
...WE'RE GOING TO PUT A STOP TO THAT JUDGMENT OF YOURS, NO MATTER WHAT.
BUT...
...SINCE RUTHERFORD GAVE US ORDERS NOT TO KILL YOU...
...WE'LL HAVE TO COMPLY, EVEN IF IT'S A PAIN.
HOWEVER...
(GIRO (GLARE)

...IF RUTHERFORD DIES, I WON'T HOLD BACK.
ZA (SCUFF)
...I WONDER IF YOU CAN REALLY DO THAT?
AND THAT DAY WILL BE THE DAY YOU DIE.
MY COMBAT SKILLS ARE FAR BETTER THAN YOURS.

...IF IT WERE AT THIS RANGE...
BUT STILL ...
NIYARI (SMIRK)
...I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
...AND MAKING IT A DOUBLE SUICIDE, GOT IT?
...I WOULDN'T MIND SHARING MY LOT WITH YOU ...

FU (HEH)
TON (PAT)
MUKU (GRR)
UNAAH!!
KORO (CALM)
I'M NOT THE ONE WITH SICK TASTES HERE!!
A LOVERS' SUICIDE WITH ANOTHER GUY?
TALK ABOUT UNSAVORY TASTES!
NO NEED TO BE SO JUMPY NOW. IT'S STILL TOO SOON FOR THE "HUNT."
I ONLY JUST GOT TO JAPAN, AND I HAVEN'T GATHERED ALL THE WEAPONS I'LL NEED YET.
WE'LL BE IN THE PREPARATION STAGE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
SUTA (STRIDE)
SUTA
...BUT...
PITARI (HALT)

...ONCE THOSE PREPA-RATIONS ARE COM-PLETE...
...DEATH WILL BE AFTER YOU.
AND WITH THAT, LET'S ALL...
...ENJOY OUR SCHOOL LIFE TOGETHER!
NIKO (SMILE)

...DON'T DIE ON ME...
...KOU-SUKE.
THAT'S GONNA BE ONE TOUGH ORDER TO FILL...
COME ON! COME ON!
A MIND CAN'T FUNCTION ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!

AH!
I WONDER WHAT TODAY'S SIDE DISH IIIIS!?
♪
PAKO (POP)
SO TODAY, LET'S HAVE OBENTOU!
SUTON (PLOP)
GUWASHI (PUSH)
HOLD IT!
DON'T GO OPENING MY BENTOU BOX WITHOUT ASKING!
YOU PLANNING ON SNATCHING IT UP AGAIN?
AAW, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
YOUR HANDMADE OBENTOU'S SO GOOD IT'S NOT FAIR, NARUMI-SAN.
KON (KNOCK)
KON
KON
KON
YES, WHO IS IT?
GATA (CLATTER)
IT'S OPEN!

GACHA (KACHAK)
ガチャ!
...CAN I HELP YOU?
AH!
ARE YOU HOPING TO JOIN THIS CLUB!?
I'M SORRY, NO.
I HAVE BUSINESS WITH AYUMU NARUMI-KUN OVER THERE.

...ME?
NIKO (SMILE)
NICE TO MEET YOU.
I'M ONE OF THE BLADE CHILDREN, KANON HILBERT.
YES.

THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED YOUR HELP WITH.
HUH?
WON'T YOU PLEASE HEAR ME OUT?

I'M ONE OF THE BLADE CHILDREN.
KANON HILBERT.
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
DEATH IS MY DANCE PARTNER
THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED YOUR HELP WITH.
WON'T YOU PLEASE HEAR ME OUT?

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
DEATH IS MY DANCE PARTNER

...H—
HOLD ON A SECOND.
DID YOU JUST SAY YOU'RE A BLADE CHILD?
IF YOU WANT A CUTE NICK-NAME FOR IT, YOU CAN CALL ME A "BLACHI"
WHY WOULD SOMEONE LIKE YOU NEED MY COOPERATION!?
LIKE THIS IS ANY TIME TO BE TALKING ABOUT NICK-NAMES!!

WELL, YOU SEE...
...EYES, ASAZUKI...
...RYOUKO, AND RIO ARE ALL AGAINST ME.
AGAINST YOU?
WE USED TO BE ALLIES, BUT...
...THAT'S BEEN COMPLETELY UNDONE.

I HAVE A "WISH" THAT I WOULD RISK MY LIFE TO FULFILL.
THAT'S WHY I'VE COME HERE ALL THE WAY FROM ENGLAND.
BUT THEY'RE TRYING TO KEEP THAT WISH FROM COMING TRUE.

ALL FOR THIS "WISH" I CAN'T GIVE UP.
YES.
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO FIGHT THEM.
...SO ASAZUKI TRANSFERRING HERE AND RYOUKO TAKAMACHI APPEARING WERE BOTH COUNTER-MEASURES AGAINST YOU?
SU (SWISH))
...I WANT YOU TO HELP ME.
YOU SHOULD BE AGAINST THEM ALREADY TOO.

BOKA (THUNK)
PON (SCRATCH)
TO!
.....
YOU...
...SEEM TO BE UP ON EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AROUND ME LATELY, EH?
I CAN'T HELP IT. I WAS IN CONTACT WITH EYES UNTIL JUST RECENTLY.
I'M RATHER WELL-INFORMED ABOUT THE SITUATION.

.....
WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT THAT "WISH" OF YOURS IS...
...I CAN'T SHAKE ON IT.
...IT'S NOTHING THAT REALLY REQUIRES ANY EXPLANATION.

AAAAH, I'LL...
...MAKE SOME TEA!
.....
PERFECT TIMING TOO SINCE WE JUST GOT OURSELVES A NEW TEA SET!
KACHA (CLINK)
KACHA
.....SO? WHAT'S YOUR "WISH"?

GASHAN (CRASH)
SURU (SLIP)
...OBLIT-ERATED.
TO HAVE ALL THE BLADE CHILDREN .....
SU (REACH)

TO HAVE ALL THE BLADE CHILDREN .....
SU (REACH)

GASHAN (CRASH)
SURU (SLIP)
...OBLIT-ERATED.

JAKI
(KACLICK)
DON'T YOU REMEMBER HEARING IT?

"THE BLADE CHILDREN ARE DANGEROUS ...
...AND MUST BE DESTROYED."
YEAH, I REMEMBER.
IT'S TRUE.
AS A FELLOW BLADE CHILD, I GUARANTEE IT.
THERE'S NO LIMIT TO HOW DANGEROUS OUR PRESENCE IS TO THIS WORLD.
IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL JUSTICE?
NO.
IT'S MY RESPON-SIBILITY AS ONE OF THEIR CURSED NUMBERS.
...SO YOU'RE GOING TO KILL THEM ALL...IS THAT IT?

LET ME HEAR YOUR ANSWER.
GU (SQUEEZE)
WILL YOU CO-OPERATE?
OR REFUSE?
IF YOU'RE GOING TO COOPERATE, THEN THAT'S FINE.
BUT SHOULD YOU REFUSE...
...I'LL SEE YOU AS AN ENEMY.
AND WITH YOU BEING SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARILY DANGEROUS ENEMY...
CHIRA (GLANCE)
...THERE'S NO WAY I CAN LET YOU LIVE.

IF THAT HAPPENS, I'M SORRY, BUT...
!
...I'LL ALSO HAVE TO KEEP THIS WITNESS TO THE MURDER SILENT.
.....
YOU COULD SAY THAT, YES...
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO STABBED RUTHER-FORD?

HMPH...
IF YOU WANNA SHOOT, SHOOT.
WH—

NARUMI-SAN!
THIS GUY STABBED RUTHERFORD-SAN!
HE'S SERIOUS!
HE WON'T SHOOT ME.
IF HE DID, THE SOUND OF THE GUNSHOT WOULD IMMEDIATELY BRING PEOPLE RUNNING.
AND HAVING BEEN THE ONE TO FIRE THE GUN, HE'D BE LEFT WITH THE STUBBORN RESIDUE OF GUNPOWDER ON HIM.
EVEN IF HE KILLED US WHERE WE STAND...
...IT WOULDN'T EVEN TAKE AN HOUR BEFORE HE WAS APPREHENDED BY THE POLICE.
AND IF THAT HAPPENED, HIS PRECIOUS "WISH" WOULD NEVER COME TRUE.
SO HE CAN'T SHOOT US...
... RIGHT?

...IMPRES-SIVE...
...OR SO I'D LIKE TO SAY. BUT, REGRET-TABLY...
...YOUR ASSUMPTION IS A BIT NAÏVE.
THIS IS AN AIR GUN.
I CAN SHOOT SILENTLY WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE.
IT WON'T EMIT A NOISE, AND IT WON'T LEAVE BEHIND ANY GUNPOWDER RESIDUE.
YOU'RE PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.
A TOY LIKE AN AIR GUN CAN'T KILL ANYBODY.

YOU MUSTN'T MAKE LIGHT OF AIR PRESSURE.
GU (SQUEEZE)
SU (SWSH)
AIR GUNS CAN BE USED FOR HUNTING TOO.
RUSHU (WHOOSH)
KA (CLACK)

THE BULLET DUG ITSELF RIGHT INTO THE WALL!
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE CONCRETE, RIGHT!?
...A NORMAL AIR GUN...
SU (FWIP)
...CAN ONLY SHOOT ITS .3 GRAM BB BULLETS AT A RATE OF 60 TO 70 METERS PER SECOND.
BUT BECAUSE THIS GUN WAS MODIFIED...
...IT HAS 150 UNITS OF PRESSURIZED AIR BEHIND EACH ROUND, LAUNCHING ITS FOUR GRAM LEAD BULLETS AT A MUZZLE VELOCITY OF 150 METERS PER SECOND, UP TO TEN CONSECUTIVE ROUNDS.
IT'S STILL INFERIOR TO A REAL GUN, BUT...
...IF I WERE TO FIRE FIVE OR SIX ROUNDS INTO YOUR HEAD FROM THIS DISTANCE, IT'D BE ENOUGH TO KILL YOU.

LET'S HAVE YOUR ANSWER.
WILL YOU COOPERATE?
OR REFUSE?
NA—
.....
NARUMI-SAN!

EVEN SO, YOU STILL CAN'T SHOOT ME.
THAT GUN...
...MIGHT DO THE TRICK, BUT...
...YOU'D HAVE TO FIRE A WHOLE FIVE ROUNDS TO KILL ME.
IN THAT TIME, SEEING AS SHE'S SO NEAR THE DOOR...
...SHE COULD RUN OUTSIDE...
...AND CALL FOR HELP.

EVEN IF YOU CAN KILL ME...
...YOU STILL CAN'T KEEP HER MOUTH SHUT.
YOU'D GET CAUGHT.
SO YOU CAN'T SHOOT.
GET READY TO MAKE A DASH FOR IT!
IF HE FIRES, RUN OUT OF THE ROOM!!
GOT IT!
I'LL RUN RIGHT AWAY IF HE ATTACKS!

PUT THE GUN DOWN.
YOU'VE LOST.
CHAKI (CLACK)
GORI (SHOVE)
...NOT YET.

THERE'S A HOLE IN YOUR LOGIC.

YOU REALLY THINK THAT IF I SHOT AND KILLED YOU RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER...
...SHE WOULDN'T HESITATE FOR A SECOND BEFORE RUNNING AWAY?
!
WHEN SOMEBODY YOU CARE ABOUT IS MURDERED BEFORE YOUR EYES...
...YOU'D TYPICALLY FREEZE FROM THE SHOCK...
...OR RUSH TO THE BODY AND CALL OUT THEIR NAME. IT'S ONE OR THE OTHER.
EVEN KNOWING THEY'D BE THE NEXT TO DIE...
...FEW WOULD RUN AWAY IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT PAUSE.

SO AFTER I KILL YOU...
...I STILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO SEAL HER LIPS FOREVER.
DAMN.....! HE SAW THROUGH ALL THE SCENARIOS SO CALMLY...
GU (PRESS)
IF IT TURNS OUT THAT SHE'S IN THE MINORITY, I LOSE.
IF NOT, I WIN.
I WOULDN'T MIND TESTING IT OUT EITHER.

...JUST QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD.
SHE'S NO ORDINARY GIRL.
YOU'RE AT A DISAD-VANTAGE.
.....
EARLIER, I THOUGHT HE'D WON, SO I WAS ABLE TO SAY I'D RUN AWAY, BUT...
...IF AYUMU WERE REALLY SHOT...

...I DON'T THINK I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES NOT TO HESITATE AND JUST RUN FOR IT...

NIKO (GRIN)
I WASN'T GOING TO SHOOT YOU FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
SU (LIFT)
...JUUUST KIDDING!
PHEW...
.....

I'VE DECIDED NOT TO KILL ANYBODY BUT THE BLADE CHILDREN.
NO MATTER WHAT HANDICAPS THAT GIVES ME, THAT'S THE ONLY RULE I'LL FOLLOW...
JUST THINK OF THAT...
...AS MY LAST SHRED OF DIGNITY.
I ONLY CAME TO CHECK TODAY.
GOSO (PUSH)
SFX: HIRA (WAVE) HIRA
GACHA (CLACK)
I'M COUNTING ON YOU NOT BECOMING AN ENEMY OF MINE.
PATAN (SLAM)

A—
ARE YOU OKAY!? NARUMI-SAN!?
I'M STILL ALIVE, SO...
...I GUESS YOU CAN COUNT THAT AS "OKAY"...
IF HE HADN'T CARED ABOUT HIS OWN RULES...
...I'D PROBABLY... HAVE BEEN KILLED...
THAT ASSHOLE... SAYING HE'S DANGER-OUS IS A SERIOUS UNDER-STATE-MENT ...!!

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE BLACK ANGEL

NOTES: RENAISSANCE / 1. ITALY = SITE OF RENAISSANCE / * 14TH-15TH CENTURIES / CROSS / (ISLAMIC CULTURE AS A STIMULUS) / WEST VARIOUS / VARIOUS TOWNS / ROME / YEN / FORM AND LARGE PAINTING / SEMI-CIRCLE ARCHES / FAT POSTS / POINTED ARCHES
KACHI
KACHI (CLICK)
KACHI
KACHI
...I'VE STILL GOT GOOSE BUMPS.
SHIT...EVEN THOUGH IT'S BEEN OVER AN HOUR SINCE IT HAPPENED...

MY WISH IS TO OBLITERATE THE BLADE CHILDREN.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU NOT BECOMING MY ENEMY.
TSUKIOMI
SO THOSE GUYS ARE ALL GONNA START KILLING EACH OTHER, EH...?
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS IF THEY'RE ENEMIES OR ALLIES...
NONE OF MY BUSINESS .....

DAMMIT! GUESS I CAN'T SAY THAT EITHER...
RATHER ...
...IT'S NOT SUCH A SIMPLE SITUATION ANYMORE ...!!

KANON HILBERT.
IN ANY CASE, I NEED INFOR-MATION ON HIM...
I'D BE FASTEST TO GO TO THE OTHER BLADE CHILDREN FOR IT, BUT...
...I CAN'T TRUST ASAZUKI.
AND I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT THAT NEWCOMER, EITHER...
..... MEANING THAT...

...MY REMAINING OPTION IS...
SIGN: MIYASHITA GENERAL HOSPITAL
ALL RIGHT!
GU (CLENCH)
HERE I GO!

SU
(STEP)
?
TA
?
TA
(TMP)
LIIIIN
(VWEEE)
AH!

RYOUKO-SAN!
YOU'RE THAT GIRL WHO WAS WITH KIYOTAKA'S LITTLE BROTHER, RIGHT?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
THAT'S MY LINE!
SCHOOL'S STILL IN SESSION.
IT'S NOT GOOD TO PLAY HOOKY!
YOU'RE SKIPPING OUT TOO, AREN'T YOU?
SO...
...WHAT'D YOU COME HERE FOR?

I'VE COME TO ASK RIO-SAN ABOUT KANON-SAN.
INFORMATION IS A PERSON'S GREATEST WEAPON.
I REALLY THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO KILL HIM!
KANON!?
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT—
HE CAME TO THE NEWSPAPER CLUB ROOM AT LUNCH TODAY.
HE HELD NARUMI-SAN AT GUNPOINT AND ASKED HIM TO COOPERATE IN THE ANNIHILATION OF THE BLADE CHILDREN!

GA (WHIRR)
TA (TAP)
CHIN (DING)
.....
...DON'T WORRY.
THE KANON YOU KNOW NOW WON'T KILL ANYBODY BUT THE BLADE CHILDREN.
...THAT'S RIGHT.

.....
...CAN I REALLY BELIEVE HIM?
PA (FLASH)
1 2 3 4
KANON-SAN ONLY CAME AS A PRE-CAUTION.
HE SAID HIMSELF HE WOULDN'T KILL ANYONE OTHER THAN THE BLADE CHILDREN, BUT...
...KANON MAY BE A KILLER, BUT...
...HE'S NOT EVIL...
THAT'S WHY...
...HE'LL DEFINITELY NEVER CROSS THAT LINE.

HIM DOING THAT TO US AND THEN JUST LEAVING MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL!
I'M GONNA RETALIATE WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!!
GATSU (CLENCH)
SFX: KI (CLENCH)
...ANY-WAY!
NOW THAT I KNOW I CAN'T BE KILLED, I'M GONNA GO ALL OUT!
.....
OH.
SO, WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, RYOUKO-SAN?
...ME?

PA (FLASH)
HMM...
WELL...
CHIN (DING)
I JUST HAD A FEELING...!

KON (KNOCK)
コンコン
KON
COME IIIN.
IF I DON'T FIGURE OUT KANON-KUN'S NEXT MOVE...
...I'LL ALWAYS BE ONE STEP BEHIND AT THIS RATE...
KACHARI (CLACK)
カチャリ!

KA—
KANO—
HULLO!

HYU (WHOOSH)
TA (TAP)
DO (SLAM)
.....!
BUT YOUR ABILITY'S TOO MUCH TO DEAL WITH.
I'M SORRY.
RIO.

BATA (FLAIL)
MMM!!
MMMM!!
BATA
AH!!
I KNOW! I'LL CALL THE NURSE!
PASHI (SLAP)
BEFORE THE CARNIVAL BEGINS, I NEED YOU TO DIE FOR ME.
TSUKIOMI

NIKO (GRIN)
IT'D BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE IF THE POLICE FOUND OUT I'M A MURDERER AND CAME AFTER ME, YOU SEE.
SO I'LL MAKE IT LOOK LIKE...
...YOU CHOKED ON A PIECE OF MELON YOU GOT FROM A VISITOR AND DIED.

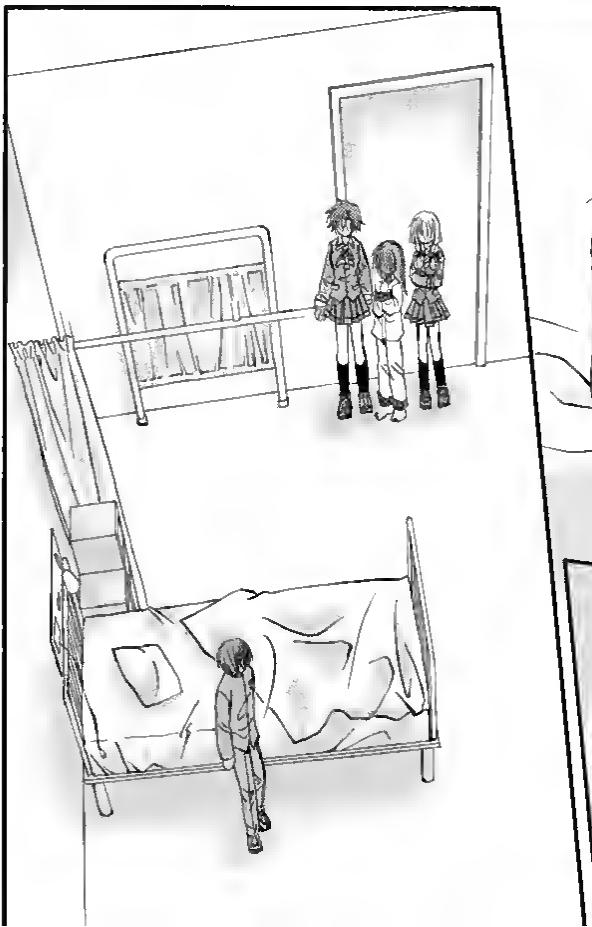
I DON'T WANNA DIE SUCH A LAME DEATH!
MMMPH!
...MM...
HOLD IT, KANON.

...OH, GREAT.
PA (RELEASE)
LOOK AT YOU.
GABA (RISE)
EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID YOU WERE STILL PREPPING, I KNEW YOU'D GO AND PULL A SURPRISE ATTACK ON RIO.
PATA (PATTER)
AND JUST WHEN I WAS GETTING TO THE GOOD PART.
HAUU .....!
PATA

GABAA (TACKLE)
FUGGH!!
YOU SAVED ME, RYOUKO-CHAAAN!
AH...
THERE, THERE.
YOU'RE STILL JUST AS TINY AS THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU...
DID YOU SHRINK SOME MORE AFTER GETTING HOSPITAL-IZED?
HAUH!
LISTEN YOU, I'VE GROWN THREE MILLIMETERS SINCE LAST YEAR!
AND MY BOOBS—
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BE TALKING ABOUT THAT!

HMPH
GI (SQUEAK)

.....



HYOI (LEAP)

スタ : SUTA (TAP)

THREE ON ONE, IS IT?
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE TO PART HERE.
HEY, NOW.
DO YOU REALLY THINK WE'LL LET YOU GET AWAY THAT EASILY?
IN RETURN FOR WHAT YOU JUST DID...
...ALLOW ME TO PAY YOU BACK IN FULL!
AND I'M STILL ANGRY OVER WHAT YOU DID AT LUNCH!
IN THIS SITUATION ...
...WE'RE THE ONES WITH THE DEFINITE ADVANTAGE.
BOKI (CRACK)

THERE YOU HAVE IT.
AND JUST SO YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING BAD FOR A WHILE...
...I'M GONNA BREAK TWO OR THREE OF YOUR BONES.
GUJI (FWIP)
GOSO (DIG)
...LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.
SU (RAISE)
THEN...
...HOW ABOUT I FORCE MY WAY THROUGH?

Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING

CHAPTER THIRTY
BLACK PATH
OF FEAR

AS YOU ALREADY KNOW, THIS IS MY ILLEGAL, MODIFIED AIR GUN.
IT CAN SILENTLY FIRE FOUR GRAM HEAVY LEAD BULLETS GOING 150 METERS PER SECOND.
GETTING HIT BY ONE WOULD BE VERY PAINFUL.
NORMALLY, YOU SHOULD DUCK FOR COVER WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.
SO LONG AS MY MARK ISN'T OFF, YOU MAY NOT DIE WITH ONE SHOT, BUT...
...YOU SHOULD STILL TAKE THIS CHANCE TO LET ME ESCAPE.
IT WOULDN'T BE GOOD IF A MURDER VICTIM WAS FOUND IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, AFTER ALL.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY THAT...
SU (SWSH)
SFX: KUSU (CHUCKLE)
...YOU SHOULD KNOW I'M ARMED TOO.
チャキ
CHAKI (CLICK)
ピク
PIKU (PERK)

IT'S JUST LIKE YOUR MODDED AIR GUN...
...BUT THE BULLETS ARE SYRINGES FILLED WITH ANESTHETICS.
ONE HIT, AND YOU'LL BE POWERLESS IN TEN SECONDS, KANON-KUN.
SFX: PAN (SMACK)
...NOW YOU'VE BEEN DRIVEN INTO A CORNER.
SO BE A GOOD BOY AND LET ME BREAK YOUR BONES.

YOU CAN'T GO MAKING A BIG SCENE IN HERE.
IF ANYBODY WERE TO COME IN THINKING SOMETHING'S UP, THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THE POLICE WOULD GET INVOLVED.
...HRM.
YOU BET YOU ARE.
I WONDER IF I REALLY AM IN THAT BAD A PINCH.
NOT TO MENTION ...
SO YOUR MOVEMENTS ARE LIMITED.
AND FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR IMPENDING "HUNT," THAT'S THE LAST THING YOU'D WANT, RIGHT?

...EVEN THOUGH YOU COULD STILL GET ROUGH WITH ME AND RIO...
...YOU CAN'T KILL THIS ONE GIRL.
AS YOU ARE NOW...
...YOU CAN'T KILL ANYBODY BUT THE BLADE CHILDREN.
MM-HM.
KO (TAP) ﾖｼ!
THAT'S THE MOST BASIC RULE I HAVE TO FOLLOW AS A "HUNTER."
WELL, IT SERVES AS A MAJOR HANDICAP FOR YOU.
SO CAN YOU REALLY GET OUT OF HERE?

SU
(FWIP)
CHA
(CLACK)
.....
PITA
(PAUSE)
LET'S FIND OUT.

GO AHEAD !!
GUI (YANK)
NI (GRIN)
...EH?
DON (SHOVE)

WA-
WAH!!
!
SHI—
.....!!
CHA (CLICK)
DAN (LEAP)
.....!!

GA
(KICK)
HAH!!
GI
(SQUEAK)
NI
(GRIN)

GAN (WHACK)
!!
DA (DASH)
GA (SNATCH)
GOTO (THUNK)

CHA (CLACK)
!!
.....

GU
(SQUEEZE)
GASHI
(GRAB)
PU
(PUEW)

PASH
(POOMF)
BUN
(PLING)

BA
(FWIP)
PASHI
(PSSHT)

OH...
HYOI (HOP)
CHAKI (KACLICK)
NI (GRIND
...YOU'VE GOT GOOD AIM.
SUTAN (STOMP)
MU (POUT)
THAT WAS REALLY CRUEL, YOU KNOW THAT!?
SUDDENLY THROWING ME INTO HIS LINE OF FIRE!
MY BAD, MY BAD.

BUT THANKS TO THAT, KANON LOST HIS SHOT.
IF HE'D AIMED POORLY, HE MIGHT HAVE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED YOU.
IN THAT INSTANT, I GOT THE CHANCE TO KICK THE GUN OUT OF HIS HAND.
AND RIO GOT THE TIME TO READY HER AIM.
PLUS, YOU SNATCHED KANON'S GUN AWAY.
IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS A TEAM PLAY TO USE YOU AS A "SHIELD," HIYONO-SAN.
A SHIELD...
IT FEELS LIKE I'M NEVER GIVEN THE PROPER TREATMENT AS A GIRL...
.....
...OH DEAR...
GI (CREAK)

YOU'VE GOT TWO GUNS AIMED AT YOU RIGHT NOW...
...AND RYOUKO-CHAN'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
YOU LOSE.
KANON-KUN.

I'M CERTAINLY IN A TIGHT SPOT...
IT'D TAKE TIME TO DEAL WITH RYOUKO BARE-HANDED...
...AND I COULD BE SHOT IN THAT TIME...
FU (SIGH)
YOU'RE RIGHT...
...BUT...
...IF A STRANGER WERE TO WALK IN ON THIS SCENE, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'D THINK?
HUH?

...IT'S EASY TO SEE WHO THE BAD GUYS HERE ARE.
FOR AN UNARMED BOY TO BE SURROUNDED LIKE THIS...
SU (FWIP)
...A "STRANGER" WILL BE COMING IN HERE!
DON'T FRET OVER SUCH UN-NECESSARY THINGS.
OR ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL SOME-THING?
...BUT...
...VERY SOON...
AH.....!!

THE NURSE CALL BUTTON!!
TON (THUMP)
TON
TON
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, TAKEUCHI-SAN!?
GUI (YANK)
GA (GRAB)
NI (GRIN)
HYOI (HOP)
DA (DASH)

TAKEUCHI-SAN, I'M COMING IN!
CHA (CLICK)
WHAT HAPPENED!?
I'M SORRY.
SHE SAID SHE WAS SUDDENLY HAVING CHEST PAINS, SO...
I SEE.
TAKEUCHI-SAN, CAN YOU STAND UP?
...Y-YES...
PLEASE...
IT WAS A SPLIT-SECOND GAP...

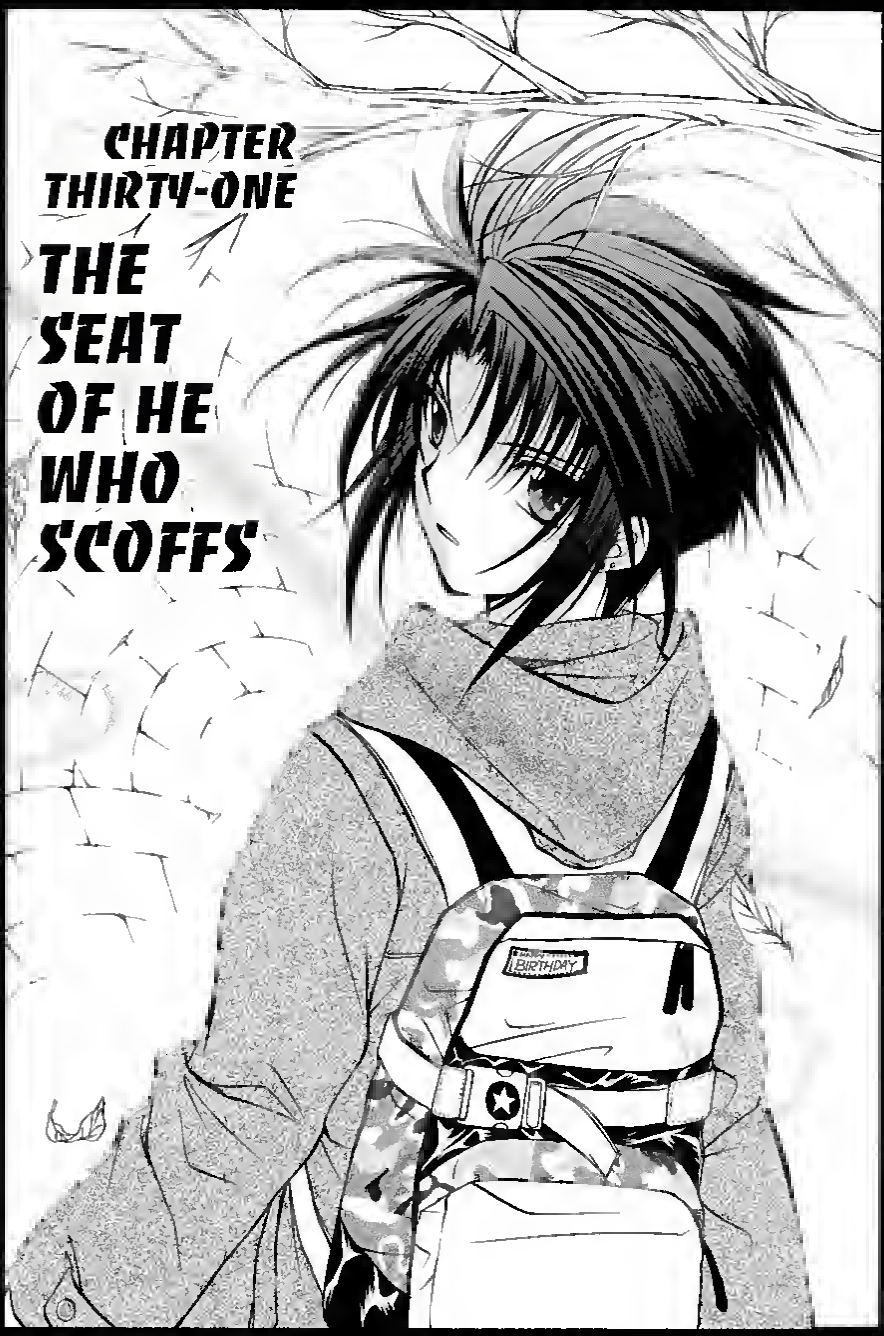
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE TURNED THE TABLES ON US JUST LIKE THAT!!
LET'S STEP OUTSIDE.
...WE SHOULDN'T GET IN THE NURSE'S WAY.

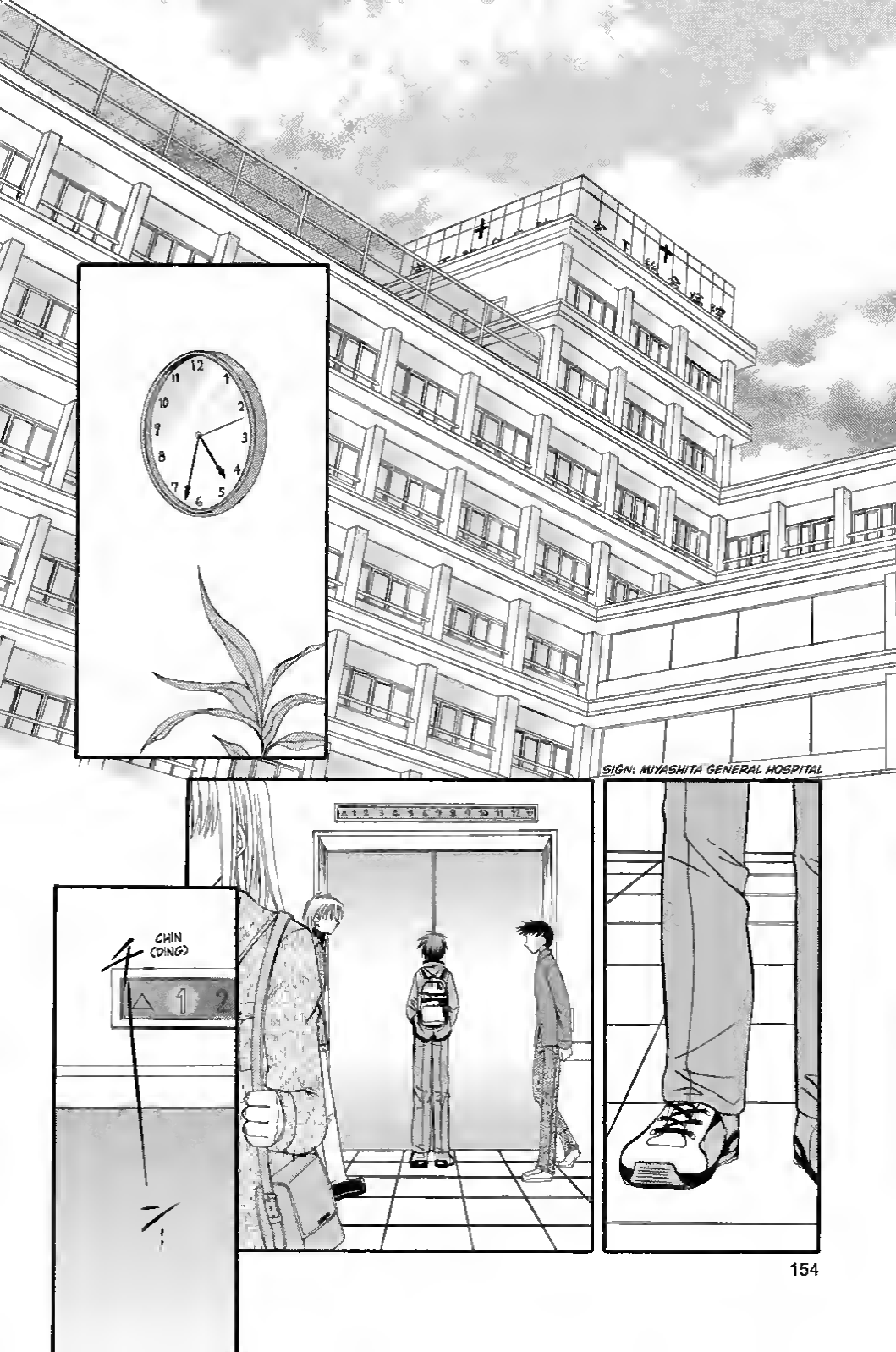
HERE.
GIVE THIS BACK TO RIO.
HYU (TOSS)
OH.
THAT'S RIGHT.
PAN (CATCH)
WE'LL CALL IT A DRAW FOR TODAY.

YOU WORKED UP QUITE A COLD SWEAT, EH?
NI (SMILE)
TON (THUD) TON
...BECAUSE WE FOOLISHLY BELIEVED THAT KANON-SAN WOULDN'T BRING A THIRD PARTY INTO THE SITUATION.
...BUT WE ALSO LOST...
...WE WON.

TRUTH IS, IF THE POLICE HAD GOTTEN INVOLVED, WE, NOT KANON, WOULD HAVE HAD A HARDER TIME EXPLAINING OURSELVES TO THEM.
WE WERE THE ONES HOLDING ALL THE WEAPONS.
... THAT'S NOT ALL ...
WE ALLOWED HIM A MEANS OF ESCAPE.
SO WE COULDN'T MAKE A DECISION IN TIME ONCE WE HEARD THE KNOCK.
...ALL WE DID WAS FIT RIGHT INTO KANON'S PLAY.
WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO AVOID SPILLING EVERYTHING ABOUT THE BLADE CHILDREN...
THAT GUY... JUST WHAT IS HE?

...THERE'S NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT.
...IT'S JUST NOT NORMAL!
...THE WAY HE STRATEGIZED HIS COMEBACK...
HIS ACTIONS AND HIS DECISION-MAKING...
HE'S JUST ANOTHER PITIFUL BLADE CHILD...


CHAPTER
THIRTY-ONE
THE
SEAT
OF HE
WHO
SCOFFS
BIRTHDAY


SIGN: MIYASHITA GENERAL HOSPITAL
CHIN (DING)

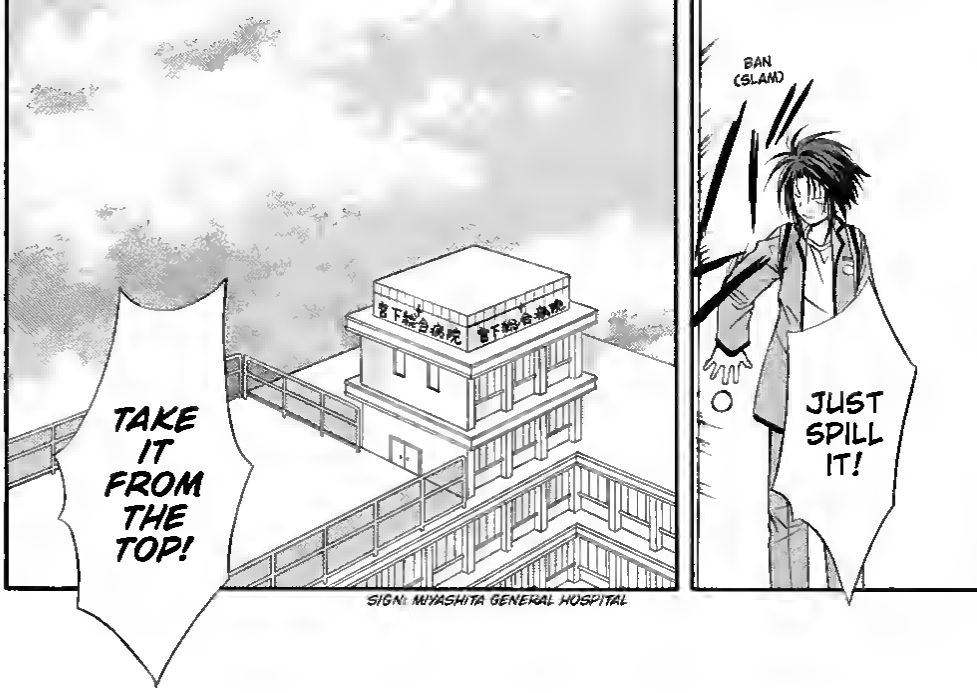
A MEMBER OF THE BLADE CHILDREN, RIO TAKEUCHI...
SHE MUST STILL KNOW SOMETHING AT LEAST...
HM?
SLI (STEP)
TON (TAP)
6
12
4
9
2
8
1
7

IT'S A TRADE SECRET.
秘密取交です。
CHIN (DING)
.....
WELL... WHATEVER.
THAT REMINDS ME, SHE'S NOT HERE...
ガ (GA) (WHIRR)
IT'S WEIRD HOW SHE'S ALWAYS WITH ME ANYWAY...
SIGN: RIO TAKEUCHI
510
竹内 理緒
RYOUKO!!
BIKU (FREEZE)
?

5:10
竹内 理緒
GOSU (BANG)
QUIT YELLING, YOU IDIOT!!
IF I'D BEEN HERE, WE COULD'VE TAKEN A STAB AT EACH OTHER AND HE MIGHT NOT HAVE GOTTEN AWAY!
YOU KNEW ABOUT KANON'S SURPRISE ATTACK AND DIDN'T TELL ME!?
.....?
?
CHA (CLACK)
SU (TURN)
.....

I'M NOT SAYING I'D GO LIGHTLY WHEN DEALING WITH KANON!
RYOUKO-CHAN'S RIGHT.
SHUT UP!!
WHAT GOOD WOULD CROSSING SWORDS WITH HIM HAVE DONE!?
THAT'S WHY I KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT.
OTHERWISE YOU'LL ONLY GET YOURSELF KILLED.
WHEN IT'S TIME TO RETREAT, RETREAT.

AH!
NARUMI-SAN!
YOU CAME?
!
.....WHAT HAPPENED?
.....
AND WHY ARE YOU HERE ANYWAY?
HMM... WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN...?
THIS SURE IS TOUGH...


BAN (SLAM)
JUST SPILL IT!
TAKE IT FROM THE TOP!
SIGN: MIYASHITA GENERAL HOSPITAL

HE'S NOT JUST SOME BAD KID...
...THAT BASTARD .....

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUT...
...HE ISN'T YOUR PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH.
NARUMI JUNIOR.
IT'S JUST AS KOUSUKE SAYS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOUR COMMON SENSE DOESN'T APPLY HERE.
SO MANY BLADE CHILDREN WILL BE KILLED...
...THAT YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE A MOVE BASED ON SOME SILLY SENSE OF JUSTICE.

IN THIS BATTLE ...
...IT'S HARD TO DECIDE WHO'S GOOD...
...AND WHO MIGHT BE EVIL.
...THAT JERK...
...USED TO BE A FRIEND OF YOURS, RIGHT?

.....
...YEAH.
HE WAS RUTHER-FORD'S BEST FRIEND...
...AND TAUGHT ME AND RYOUKO HOW TO FIGHT.
HE WAS A RELIABLE ALLY WHO JOYFULLY TOOK THE LEAD IN KILLING OFF THE "HUNTERS."
"HUN-TERS" ...?

INCLUDING KANON...
...THEY'VE BEEN OUR MAIN OPPONENTS TILL NOW.

...IT'S THE NAME GIVEN TO THOSE WHO AIM TO ANNIHILATE THE BLADE CHILDREN.

SO THEN...

...IT HAPPENED ABOUT A YEAR AGO...

...KANON-SAN USED TO BE ON THE SIDE THAT PROTECTED THE BLADE CHILDREN.
AND YET HE DID A COMPLETE 180 AND BECAME A "HUNTER," IS THAT IT?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH HIS HEAD, BUT THAT JERK...
...MADE A FACE LIKE HE'D REALLY THOUGHT IT OVER, AND...
I KNEW IT. THE BLADE CHILDREN REALLY SHOULD BE EXTERMI-NATED.
...IS WHAT HE HAD THE NERVE TO SAY.
AND WITH THAT, WE WERE CUT OFF.
...KIYOTAKA-SAMA TRIED TO PERSUADE HIM TO NOT BECOME A "HUNTER," BUT STILL...
EVEN SO...
MY BROTHER DID?

THAT'S RIGHT...
HE ABANDONED RUTHER-FORD.
BUT NOT EVEN KIYOTAKA COULD CHANGE KANON'S MIND.
...THOUGH HE SHOULD'VE BEEN READY FOR THAT.
NO ONE ELSE COULD'VE CHANGED HIS MIND...
.....

BECAUSE I'VE HAD THE SAME THOUGHT MYSELF.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHERE KANON-KUN'S COMING FROM.
GYU! (SQUEEZE)
...THAT MAYBE WE...
...REALLY SHOULDN'T BE ALIVE...
.....

...GOING TO KILL HIM?
...ARE YOU GUYS...
NO.
...WE ONLY WANT TO STOP HIM.
...BECAUSE HE'S OUR DEAR FRIEND...
AND IF POSSIBLE, WE DON'T WANT THE POLICE TO GET INVOLVED EITHER.
EVEN IF KANON-KUN MEANS TO KILL US...
...WE WON'T DO THE SAME.

KANON-KUN MIGHT BE RIGHT.
AND WE MIGHT BE RIGHT TOO.
THEN AGAIN, WE MIGHT ALL BE WRONG.
.....
...I KNOW FOR SURE IS...
THE ONLY THING...
...THAT KANON-KUN AND THE REST OF US...
...ARE MURDERERS.

...THIS IS A CURSED BATTLE BETWEEN CURSED PEOPLE.
NO MATTER WHO TAKES OUR SIDE, THEY'LL ONLY GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY.....
THOSE WHO WEREN'T BORN WITH STAINED HANDS CAN'T FIGHT THIS BATTLE.

GO HOME AND GO TO BED.
... THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, DON'T YOU SEE ...?
.....

...IF I WASN'T INVOLVED, THEN...
...I'D SAY FIGHT WHATEVER BATTLE YOU WANT.
I'D BE GLAD TO TAKE IT EASY AND GO TO SLEEP.
...BUT...

...IT STILL BOTHERS ME...
...AM I REALLY NOT INVOLVED?
YOU STAY OUT OF THIS.
SHUT UP.
TO HAVE GONE THROUGH SO MUCH... HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE UNINVOLVED!
THAT'S RIGHT! YEAH!
...TH—

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU!?
I'M GOING OUT OF MY WAY TO SUPPORT YOU!
THAT'S ENOUGH, JUST BE QUIET.
IF ANYBODY'S NOT INVOLVED, IT'S YOU. HANDS DOWN.
BUCH! (SNAP)
YOU'VE USED ME IN SO MANY WAYS UP TILL NOW. HOW DARE YOU SAY I'M NOT INVOLVED!?
ONCE YOU DON'T NEED ME ANYMORE, YOU TOSS ME ASIDE! IS THAT IT!?
YOU ALWAYS THROW YOUR GIRLS AWAY LIKE THIS!?
UWAH... WHAT A LOW-LIFE.
BI (POINT)
SEEMS HE'S MADE PLENTY OF GIRLS CRY BEFORE...
NOW LOOK HERE!!
QUIT SPREADING RUMORS!!

IT'S TRUE I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR CURSE OR YOUR PROBLEMS.
TCHI
THERE'S PROBABLY A TON OF THINGS I DON'T KNOW.
...BUT...
...THERE IS ONE THING I DO KNOW FAR BETTER THAN YOU...

I KNOW MY BROTHER BETTER THAN ANYBODY.
SO LISTEN UP...
...THERE'S NOTHING MY BROTHER CAN'T DO.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING MY BROTHER WANTS, HE'LL MAKE IT HAPPEN.
NO MATTER HOW IMPOSSIBLE A SITUATION SEEMS, MY BROTHER WILL NEVER FAIL AT IT.
...YOU BELIEVE THE WEIRDEST THINGS.
THE REALITY IS THAT HE FAILED TO PERSUADE KANON—
I'M TELLING YOU, THAT'S THE WRONG WAY TO LOOK AT IT.

...DON'T TELL ME...
YOU...
FROM THE VERY START, MY BROTHER NEVER PLANNED ON PERSUADING HIM.
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY MY BROTHER TURNED THIS KANON GUY AGAINST YOU.
THAT'S WHAT KIYOTAKA NARUMI IS ALL ABOUT...

WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENED...
...AND WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN...
...IS ALL PART OF MY BROTHER'S PLAN.

EVERYONE, INCLUDING THAT GUY...
...IS JUST DANCING IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND...!
...SO THERE'S NO WAY...
GIRI (CLENCH)
...I'M NOT INVOLVED.
AFTER ALL, THE ONE WHO'S BEING MADE TO DANCE THE MOST...

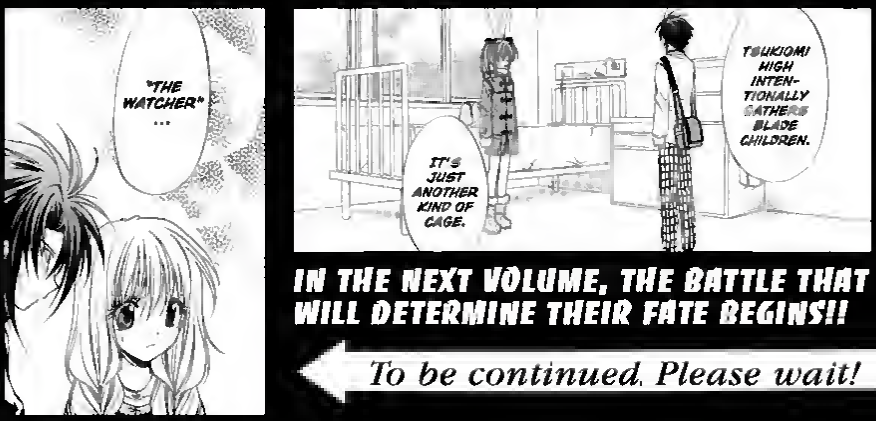
Spiral THE BONDS OF REASONING 6 THE END

THE TIME TO BATTLE THE HARBINGER OF FATE, KANON, DRAWS NEAR.

MY WISH IS MY OWN.
FOR THIS BATTLE WITH KANON-KUN...
...YOU WILL LEND US YOUR POWER, RIGHT?
SO HE'S PREPARED A REAL SUB-MACHINE GUN FOR HIMSELF.
THIS MIGHT BE A BATTLE TO HELP ADVANCE THE LITTLE BROTHER TO THE CROSS-ROADS OF FATE.

THOSE WHO BELIEVE HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE FATE...

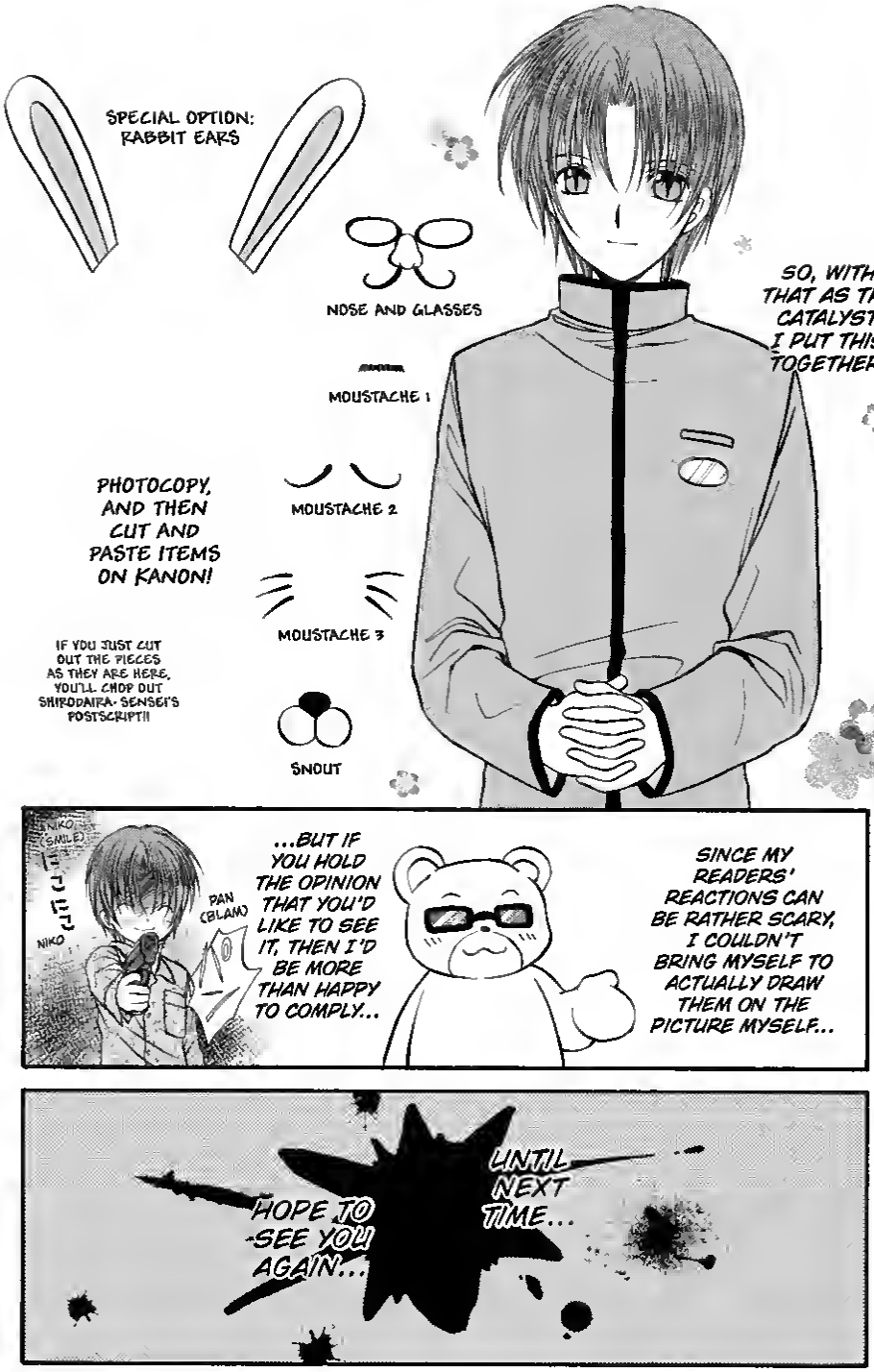
THEN, A SHOCKING REVELATION...!!



IN THE NEXT VOLUME, THE BATTLE THAT WILL DETERMINE THEIR FATE BEGINS!!

To be continued. Please wait!

Spiral work diary
THE NEW CHARACTER, "KANON HILBERT," DOMINATED THE CONVERSATION AT OUR SPIRAL WORKPLACE.
-LET'S PLAY WITH KANON-
HERE.
SU (PASS)
IT WAS A DOODLE OF KANON... WITH THE FAMOUS PARTY FAVOR OF A "NOSE AND GLASSES" (WITH MOUSTACHE ATTACHED).
THIS WOULD LOOK GOOD ON HIM
PU (PFFT)


SPECIAL OPTION: RABBIT EARS
NOSE AND GLASSES
MOUSTACHE 1
MOUSTACHE 2
MOUSTACHE 3
SNOUT
PHOTOCOPY, AND THEN CUT AND PASTE ITEMS ON KANON!
IF YOU JUST CUT OUT THE PIECES AS THEY ARE HERE, YOU'LL CHOP OUT SHIRODAIRA-SENSEI'S POSTSCRIPT!!
SO, WITH THAT AS THE CATALYST, I PUT THIS TOGETHER.
NIKO (SMILE)
NIKO
PAN (BLAM)
...BUT IF YOU HOLD THE OPINION THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IT, THEN I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO COMPLY...
SINCE MY READERS' REACTIONS CAN BE RATHER SCARY, I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ACTUALLY DRAW THEM ON THE PICTURE MYSELF...
HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
UNTIL NEXT TIME...

AFTERWORD

Dear me, hello to all my regular favorite readers. This is Kyo Shirodaira.

Wow, it's the sixth volume already. Compared to Volume 1, the content has changed quite a bit, hasn't it? As a story, it's carried out its natural progression. Or rather, it's been zapped by some light beam from god-knows-where and suddenly gone rogue on me . . . at least that's how it feels.

Due to various circumstances, *Spiral* has developed differently from how I'd planned. But of all the things I'd thought of doing someday since the serialization started, I do plan on accomplishing at least one. And that is "introducing a really cool female character."

This "really cool female" I speak of is not Madoka. Her form is like that of most females in manga since time immemorial and to a guy who'd think, "She's a strong-minded, reliable, mannish woman on the outside, but in reality she's naive and lonesome . . . and when things get tough, she'd be in a pickle if I weren't around, she's that adorable, fu-fu," she's a remarkably convenient female character. When I was in college, my graduation thesis was on "Women in the Workforce," so I've analyzed the issue quite thoroughly, and I'm sure I'm not wrong. Ryouko also probably isn't much more than a variation on this.

When I think "really cool female," I'm talking about Rio Takeuchi. She's tiny, cute, says "Haauh!" when she's all-flailing about, but she's also tough as nails. She's intellectual and always composed. She knows what she's capable of and what she's not. And if a time comes when she knows she can't handle something, she doesn't overdo it and looks to those around her for help. She also decides everything herself, taking responsibil-

ity for things on her own. She doesn't swagger and boast about her strength, and she doesn't demand to be protected. Rio's outward appearance screams "guys can't help her but want to hold her tight and protect her," but she's an independent girl in every meaning of the word. There's nothing cooler than a self-reliant person. That's why I just can't let her go.

I have the feeling that this kind of character is surprisingly rare. That's why I wanted to introduce her. But it's difficult. Even if I could say, "I want her to be like this" and explain in words, I couldn't imagine her as an actual character in action. At the drafting stage, I'd written in her lines and actions, but she was a failure of a character whose personality kept changing. That's when I finally firmly grasped the dreaded hand I had to in order to achieve my ambition.

"Mizuno-san, do something about her," I said . . . and he managed to help me. More than I'd ever expected. In that way, I think I safely achieved the ambition I'd had since the start of the serialization. It's turned into a beautiful story that teaches that you're not alone.

Before I finish this, I'd like to make an apology. I always used to write the side-story novel (in Japanese!) on the GANGAN NET page (http://gangan.square-enix.co.jp/spiral/) in time with the release of the manga, but this time around, I took a break. For all of you who were looking forward to it, I'm truly very sorry. As compensation, I hope you can at least enjoy the second installment of the short story version of ***Spiral*** called "The Steel Gang's Secret Room" that was released in March. I'm pretty depressed that I had to write this, but I promise I'll make it up to you next time.

Well, I'll be praying to see you all again in Volume 7.

城平京

KYO SHIRODAIRA

Spiral 6

THE BONDS OF REASONING Omake!

TRANSLATION NOTES

p49
The **Kansai dialect** is a language group spoken in the Kansai region of Japan where Osaka and Kyoto are. It is characterized as more melodic, looser, and "harsher" by speakers of the standard Japanese language.

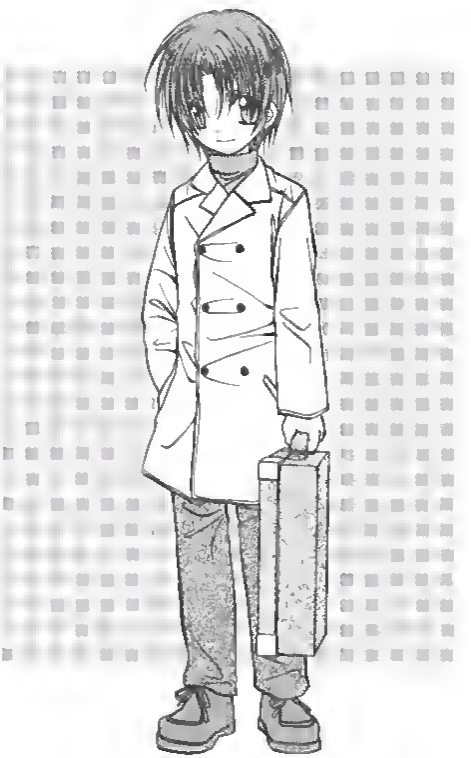
p61
A **double suicide** and a **lovers' suicide** are written with the same kanji. In Japan, a double suicide commonly refers to two lovers commiting suicide together. This manner of suicide is seen as romantic in Japanese tradition as it involves two lovers who decide to enjoy the afterlife together rather than face a society that won't allow their love.

p64
An **obentou** is a boxed meal quite similar to a boxed lunch only more common in Japanese society for old and young alike. It usually consists of rice, fish or meat, and some pickled or cooked vegetables.

IN THE
DETECTIVE KIYOTAKA NARUMI

Spiral Side-story Novel
"The Great Detective Kiyotaka Narumi
~ Kurumi Kohinata's Challenge ~"
is now available on GANGAN NET!!
(It's in Japanese)

http://gangan.square-enix.co.jp/spiral/



SPIRAL
The Bonds of Reasoning ⑥

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Eita Mizuno

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